

receiving free or reduced price lunches, the National School Lunch Program often times provides the most nutritious meal or the only meal that some children receive in a day.

We celebrate another year of this Program because it has helped combat the growing hunger and poverty levels among children in our country. According to the Food Research and Action Center, National School Lunch Program has grown from about 7.1 million children participating in 1947 to over 27.2 million in the 2001–2002 school year. The program operates in more than 99,800 public and non-profit private schools and residential childcare institutions, with over 187 billion lunches having been served.

National School Lunch Program is just one step in developing our children into the prosperous, successful individuals we want them to become. The Program's Team Nutrition Initiative focuses on teaching and motivating children to make food choices that enhance their energy, growth, and potential. In addition, the Program is vitally important to achieving our educational goals. Poorly fed children have more difficulty learning, are less attentive in class, and suffer more chronic problems, such as absenteeism and tardiness, than children who are properly nourished. By making nutritious meals available to all school children, the National School Lunch Program will help us ensure that we leave no child behind. According to the Food Research and Action Center, proper nutrition improves a child's behavior, school performance, and overall cognitive development. All in all, properly nourished children more actively participate in the education experience, which benefits them, their fellow students, and the entire school community. Studies have shown what we already have known—that healthy school meals play a critical and positive role in students' development and learning process. Unfortunately, we have a double-sided battle to fight, with regards to mal-nourishment and obesity. A peer-reviewed study conducted by academic researchers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, found that girls in food insecure households had a significantly lower risk of being overweight if they participated in the National School Lunch Program. The findings suggest that participation in these Federal child nutrition programs can combat our growing problems with obesity in children.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2000, 10.5 percent of all U.S. households, representing 20 million adults and 13 million children, were "food insecure" because of lack of resources. In 2001, Illinois reported 9.2 percent of households are food insecure, which represents 3,239,229 children under the age of 18. Thanks to the National School Lunch Program, there are over 4,446 schools participating in Illinois, with over 1,083,548 students that benefits from it. Specifically in Chicago Public Schools, over 350,000 students are registered in the Program.

If President Truman found this to be important to our national security in 1946, we should continue his vision in 2003 by continuing to support National School Lunches. As the Committee on Education and the Workforce, of which I serve, continues to examine this program during its reauthorization, I will continue to ensure that good nutrition is promoted among our children, thus helping them

to become healthier, positive, citizens within our country.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND FELIX SANTANA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of the late Reverend Felix Santana, a man who has served his faith and community tirelessly throughout his life. On October 17, 2003, the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County will honor the Reverend with an award for his contributions as a role model and mentor for Latino youths.

Reverend Santana was born in Humacao, Puerto Rico on August 21, 1924. In 1948 he moved to northern Indiana where he worked in the steel industry for two years. When America became entrenched in the Korean War, Reverend Santana heroically served his country in the U.S. Army and was decorated with the United Nations Service Medal. After the war, and a productive career in design, the Reverend entered the Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine.

After completing his studies, Reverend Santana and his family settled down in Monmouth County, New Jersey. It was then that Reverend Santana established the first Hispanic Ministry in Asbury Park, New Jersey. In addition, he led similar efforts in Ossining, New York, Plainfield, and Jersey City, New Jersey. However, the Reverend's commitment did not end at his religious responsibilities. Reverend Santana made time to serve Hispanics and others in his community. He helped set up an anti-poverty agency called "Checkmate, Inc" as was actively involved with the Puerto Rican Civic Association and the freeholders of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Santana believed in serving his community. The legacy that he has left behind will continue to serve those he has given so much of himself too. I ask that my colleagues rise and join me to honor this most respectable man, Reverend Felix Santana.

PENSION FUNDING EQUITY ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 3108, the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2003, a bill that passed this body last week, but also to express my dismay that a non-controversial, bipartisan provision was stripped from that bill before this House had an opportunity to vote for it. It is my hope that this provision, which would stabilize small business defined benefit pension plans, can be included in any conference report that this House may be asked to consider this year.

The provision, known as Section 415, would have replaced the 30-year Treasury bond rate with a fixed interest rate of 5.5 percent for pur-

poses of the maximum cap on benefits under Internal Revenue Code section 415. In the case of a small business defined benefit plan, the maximum cap on benefits can have an enormous impact on funding, due to the small number of participants. The 30-year Treasury bond rate that business must currently use to calculate funding is extremely volatile, leading to unpredictable funding requirements. For example, just last year between March and September (only 6 months), the 30-year rate fluctuated by almost a full percentage point—96 basis points—resulting in funding obligations for a benefit that varied by as much as \$140,000. That may not be much to a large company, but it is significant to a small business.

The cost of this unpredictability is choking off capital investments, new hires, higher wages, or better health care. The requirement to use an obsolete standard is depriving our economy of desperately needed capital at a time when our businesses and our workers need it most.

The small business provision has bipartisan support both in the House and Senate, it has no impact on current rules for calculating lump sums for rank-and-file participants, and there does not appear to be any substantive objections to its inclusion. So I am dismayed that it would have been taken out of the larger, two year pension fix.

I trust that as this process moves forward—in conference if there is an opportunity—we will be able to reattach this important small business provision to the bill.

RECOGNIZING MR. DIMAS MONTALVO

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to laud the accomplishments of Dr. Dimas Montalvo, a longtime community activist. Mr. Montalvo is the founder of the Latino American Committee and a tremendous supporter of various Latino-related programs. Friends and neighbors refer to him as a hometown hero for his many accomplishments and his longstanding service to the Latino community.

In search of a better future, Mr. Montalvo left Puerto Rico for New Jersey in 1957. He settled in Long Branch in 1959 where he began working at the Fort Monmouth Army Base barbershop before opening his own shop in 1965. Following the opening of his business, Mr. Montalvo started attending classes in the hopes of earning his GED and improving his English skills.

In 1969 Mr. Montalvo's barbershop was relocated and another business, Montalvo's Rooming House, was established in conjunction with the shop. Currently, he is still running both businesses from the same location, which has become a site for community outreach. It is there that Mr. Montalvo counsels people from all walks of life with various questions, concerns and problems. Over the years, Mr. Montalvo has become very active in numerous community organizations, including the Monmouth Community Action Program and the Spanish Fraternity of Monmouth County.

In 1992 Mr. Montalvo was appointed Commissioner of the City of Long Branch Housing Authority, while also serving as a member of the Long Branch Health Advisory Board. Later he founded the Latino American Committee, on which he served as President for many years. The LAC is responsible for many great things, such as collecting funds to be used in scholarships for Latino students and organizing the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Monmouth County, which exclusively serves the needs of Latino merchants and professionals.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr. Montalvo on his hard work and dedication to the Latino community. I would like to thank him for all that he has done and all those that he has helped through the years. I ask my colleagues to rise with me in honoring the distinguished Mr. Dimas Montalvo.

TRIBUTE TO ARMY SPECIALIST
JOSHUA NEUSCHE

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, on October 26, 2003, a memorial service in honor of Army Specialist Joshua Neusche will be held at the Camden County Courthouse Square in Camdenton, Missouri. On this occasion, participants will dedicate a tree and marker on the courthouse lawn to the memory of one of our neighbors, a young man whose life was tragically cut short while he served his fellow Americans by wearing the uniform of a citizen soldier.

Sp. Josh Neusche of Montreal, Missouri, was a member of the Missouri Army National Guard's 203rd Engineer Battalion from Joplin. He deployed to Iraq with his unit in May 2003. During this deployment, Sp. Neusche became seriously ill and passed away on July 12, 2003.

By all accounts, he was an outstanding young man and a favorite among his friends. Josh graduated from Camdenton High School in 2002. A participant in a number of extracurricular activities, Josh played in the Laker Band and the Pep Band, ran for the award winning track and cross country teams, was elected 2002 Prom King, tutored children in the A+ Program, and volunteered with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters in Camdenton. He was a member of the Buffalo Prairie Baptist Church in Montreal, Missouri.

Prior to his Guard activation, Josh attended Southwest Missouri State University while holding a full-time job and finding time to volunteer at the Boys' Club in Springfield, Missouri. He inspired loyalty and affection from his friends, as evidenced by the fact that the members of his unit took up a collection after Josh became ill which allowed his family to visit him in the hospital in Germany.

In wartime, the very best young people our country produces are asked to risk and possibly lose their lives in order to advance our national interests. In peacetime, serving as an airman, sailor, soldier, or marine also requires a great deal of hard work and sacrifice. Whether in war or in peace, those sacrifices are particularly difficult for the service members' families.

We can only imagine the pain felt by Josh's family—particularly by his mother, Cindy, his father, Mark, and his brother, Jake—as they have been forced to deal with his untimely death and this sudden, unexpected loss. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his entire family and circle of friends.

Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to Sp. Neusche for his service to our country. We also owe more than we can ever repay to Josh's family, who raised this young man and instilled in him the values that enabled him to succeed as an American soldier. On behalf of my fellow Missourians and my fellow Americans, I thank the Neusche family for their selfless contribution and immeasurable sacrifice.

HONORING WWII VETERAN TONY
VITKUS

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honor a veteran of World War II and a resident of Kenosha, Wisconsin, who is currently visiting our Nation's Capital for the first time in his life. His story is a remarkable one, and I'd like to share a few highlights with you.

Tony Vitkus served in the Marine Corps in the South Pacific from 1942 to 1945. He was a rear gunner in a Dauntless dive bomber and survived a crash in that airplane. That very plane is now on display at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum just a few blocks from here. This week, Mr. Vitkus went there and saw his aircraft.

Anyone familiar with the dangerous position of a rear gunner knows the immense risk that Mr. Vitkus took in serving his country in this capacity. And, as if this wasn't enough, he also served as plane captain of a Corsair fighter on the U.S.S. *Bennington*.

After the war, Tony Vitkus got married and raised six children while working in Kenosha as a milkman and later as a pool custodian. He has been an active member of the community, serving as an alderman and also on the Water Commission, and he stays active to this day.

It is because of Tony Vitkus and others like him that we prevailed in World War II. These courageous individuals and the military men and women who have followed in their footsteps are the reason we remain free to this day. We owe them our respect and gratitude for their service and many sacrifices for our country.

RECOGNIZING FATHER MIGUEL
VIRELLA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments of Father Miguel Virella, a man dedicated to the advocacy of a solid educational foundation for the Latino youth. Father Miguel is being honored as a mentor and role model to the Latino

Community's youth by the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County, Inc., for his positive influence and many contributions to the Latino community. In my mind there is no one more deserving to receive this award.

Through a strong family, Father Virella was taught that determination and compassion were imperative parts of living a devout life. His religious and academic journey was influenced by the teachings of his friends and family. It was his devotion to his faith that motivated him to pursue studies of a religious nature and eventually to join the priesthood.

In 1976 Father Miguel graduated from Juan Rios Serpas High School, in his hometown of Ciales, Puerto Rico. Soon after, he traveled to New Jersey with his family where he was introduced to the Religious Order of the Society of the Divine Word. His participation in this community led him to develop a deep interest in working with the poor and minorities of other countries. He could relate to the hardships endured by those who were starting a new life in America and his compassion for those in need compelled him to do all that he could to help.

In 1984, Father Miguel decided to continue his studies in Dubuque, Iowa at Divine Word College. Later, he enrolled at the University of Saint Louis, Missouri and was awarded a Bachelors degree in Sociology with a minor in Spanish. Father Miguel decided to continue his studies in Theology, for which he received a Masters degree in Divinity. He was ordained as a priest in the Society of the Divine Word shortly thereafter.

Following his ordination in 1995, Father Miguel was asked to minister at St. Anthony Claret parish in Lakewood, NJ where he remained for two years. Due to the large number of incoming Hispanic parishioners, he was later called to serve at St. Rose of Lima in Freehold. He remained there for four years serving as minister to his fellow Hispanics before moving to our Lady of Providence in Neptune, NJ, in January of 2001. Father Miguel still serves as the minister to that parish which is composed of over four hundred families.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that Father Miguel Virella is an asset to the Hispanic community and should be lauded for his accomplishments. I ask that my colleagues rise up and join me in honoring this most respectable man, Father Miguel Virella.

HONORING DAN ECKSTROM FOR
HIS PUBLIC SERVICE AND DEDICATION TO PIMA COUNTY

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to pay tribute to a man who has dedicated himself to public service and serves as a shining role model in our community. I speak none other than of Mr. Dan Eckstrom who recently retired from serving on the Pima County Board of Supervisors in Arizona.

Dan is a native of South Tucson and a 1965 graduate of Pueblo High School. In 1969, he graduated from the University of Arizona, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government. In addition to his duties as County Supervisor, he has more than 30 years of progressive business management experience.